

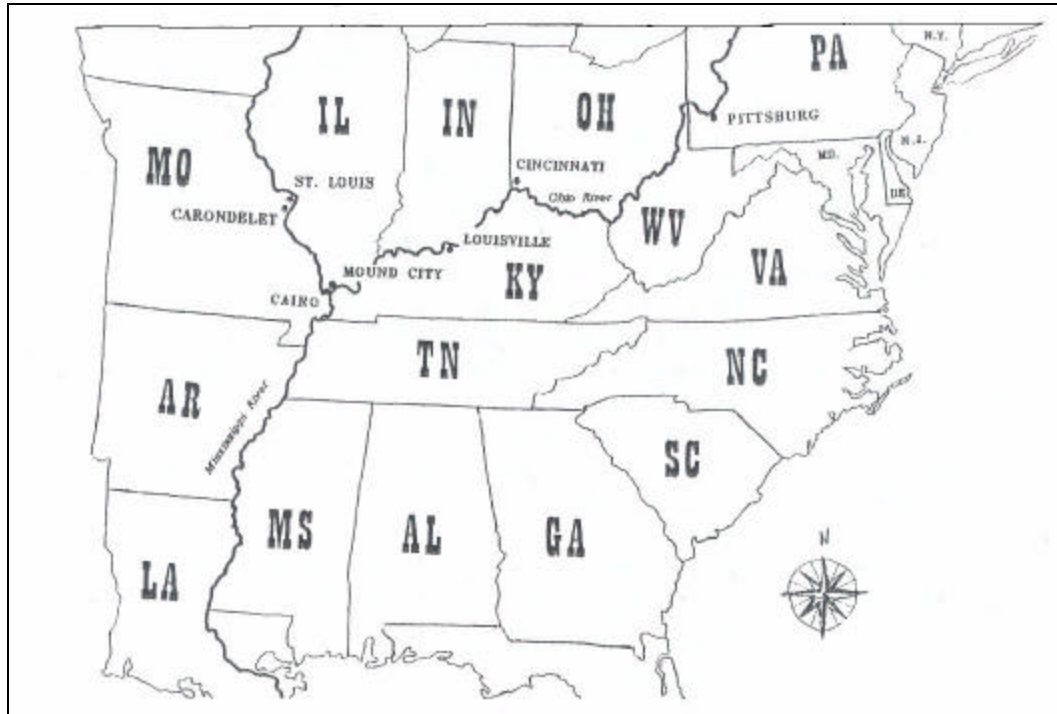
Vicksburg National Military Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Vicksburg National Military Park



Gunboats on the Mississippi



“...Not Even a Lady Frightened.”

On a Saturday afternoon in October 1861, a large crowd gathered at the Carondelet Marine Ways to observe the launching of the first ironclad built in the Western Hemisphere. As the gunboat was gradually lowered into the Mississippi River, one observer commented that the operation went so smoothly, “...that we found the boat floating gracefully upon the water, and nobody hurt, and not even a lady frightened.”

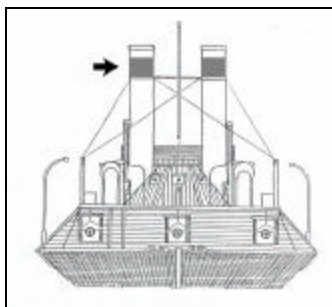
To Regain Control of the Lower Mississippi

The *CARONDELET* was one of seven ironclads, designed by Samuel M. Pook and built by James B. Eads, to aid the Union objective of regaining control of the Lower Mississippi from the Confederacy. The seven gunboats, nicknamed “*Pook Turtles*” after their designer, and because of their resemblance to mud turtles, were constructed between August 1861 and January 1862 at an average cost of \$101,808 each. James Eads, a retired engineer who had made a fortune salvaging sunken vessels on the Western Waters, financed the construction of the gunboats and was later reimbursed by the U.S. Government.

Eads had wanted the ironclads named for Union military leaders; however,

Andrew H. Foote, Commander of the Western Flotilla, decided that the gunboats would instead be named for cities and towns along the Ohio and Upper Mississippi Rivers. Thus, the *CARONDELET*, *LOUISVILLE*, *PITTSBURG*, and *ST. LOUIS* were built at Carondelet on the outskirts of St. Louis, Missouri, while the *CAIRO*, *CINCINNATI*, and *MOUND CITY* were constructed on the banks of the Ohio River at Mound City, Illinois. Completed two months before the *MONITOR* and *VIRGINIA* clashed at Hampton Roads, the Eads ironclads would play an integral role in the Western Theatre of operations during the American Civil War.

Identifying Features



The Eads gunboats looked so much alike, that different color bands were painted around the chimneys to distinguish them.

CAIRO..... Gray
CARONDELET..... Red

CINCINNATI..... Blue
LOUISVILLE..... Green
MOUND CITY..... Orange
PITTSBURG..... Brown
ST. LOUIS..... Yellow

The Ironclads in Action!



From their first strike at Ft. Henry on the Tennessee River in 1862, to the Red River Expedition of 1864, the “*Pook Turtles*” provided invaluable assistance to the Union campaign on the Western Waters. In many instances, the gunboats had the war wounds to prove it! At Ft. Donelson in February 1862, the *ST. LOUIS* sustained 59 hits from Confederate batteries overlooking the Cumberland River! In May of the same year, both the *CINCINNATI* and *MOUND CITY* were

heavily damaged by the Confederate rams during action at Ft. Pillow and were run aground to avoid sinking. The *CINCINNATI* wasn’t as lucky when she was sunk a year later by Confederate batteries firing from the bluffs at Fort Hill in Vicksburg! Finally, in one of the heavier losses to be suffered by a naval vessel in the Civil War, 150 of *MOUND CITY*’s crew were killed or injured when a shell pierced and exploded her steam drum in June of 1862.

What Happened to the Ironclads?

CAIRO

*Struck a torpedo and sank in Yazoo River, December 12, 1862.
*Wreck raised December 12, 1964.

CARONDELET

*Decommissioned June 20, 1865.
*Sold November 29, 1865.
*Hull became wharfboat at Gallipolis, Ohio.
*Engines used in towboat *QUAKER*.

CINCINNATI

*Decommissioned August 4, 1865.
*Sold March 28, 1866.
*Sank at moorings in Cache River, 1866.

LOUISVILLE

*Decommissioned July 21, 1865.
*Sold November 29, 1865.

MOUND CITY

*Sold November 9, 1865.
*Broken up, 1866.

PITTSBURG

*Sold November 29, 1865.
*Abandoned June, 1870.

ST. LOUIS

*Renamed *BARON DE KALB* September 8, 1862.
*Sunk by torpedo 1 mile below Yazoo City, July 13, 1863.